FARMTOWN TALES

MARY WOLFE THOMPSON

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PETER SINGLECOMB RAN TO THE FARM DOG WHO LAY ASLEEP IN THE SHADE OF THE MAPLE TREE

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BY

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TO

Frankie and his Mother

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FARMTOWN TALES

PETER SINGLECOMB

"CLUCK, cluck! Cluck, cluck! Children! Children!" Mother Speckle-hen stuck her head out through the slats of her house. "The sun's going down, and it's time you were in bed."

"Peep, peep! Yes, yes!" said Gentle-chick.

"Peep, peep! No, no!" said Tomboy-chick, but one by one all the ten little chicks hopped onto the bottom slat of their house, teetered a minute, then dropped inside, and Mother Speckle-hen cuddled them under her warm feathery wings. Then they all began to sing

together, "Chrrr, chrrr!" and would have sung themselves to sleep, but Tomboy-chick who was always restless, stuck his head out from under the feathers and said, "Ma, tell us a story!"

Of course all the other chicks said, "Peep, peep! Yes, yes!"

"Dear me!" said Mother Speckle-hen, "I thought you were all settled for the night, and goodness knows I'm tired enough; fastened in this coop all day, and worrying about what you're getting into and out of, and can't see you, and you won't come when I call." She flounced herself about, and Gentle-chick said,

"Oh, Mother dear, you're stepping on me!"

Then Mother Speckle-hen became very quiet and said gently, "What story shall I tell? Gentle-chick may choose because I hurt her."

And Gentle-chick said, "Peter Singlecomb!"

"That old story?" said Mother Speckle-hen, "Why I've told it to you a thousand times already!" but all the little chicks said,

"Peep, peep! Yes, yes! Peter Singlecomb!

Peter Singlecomb!" and so Mother Speckle-hen began:

"Once long ago, there lived a foolish young chick called Peter Singlecomb. He was so proud that he never asked any questions, and he was so silly that he believed everything anyone told him. When he was six weeks old he learned to crow and he sat on the fence all day practicing. 'D'doo!' he said, 'D'doo,' and thought he was grown up.

"Well, just as he was in the middle of a d'doo, one of the guinea hens came flying as fast as ever she could. Now the guineas are great jokers for all their solemn looks, and this one thought she would take the pride out of silly Peter, so she came flapping and screaming, 'Peter Singlecomb! Peter Singlecomb! Your mother's lost her comb, and you're to go and find it.'

"Peter fell right off the fence screeching, 'Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it! Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it!' and never stopped to hear any more.

"As fast as his yellow legs would carry him

he ran to the farm dog who lay asleep in the shade of the maple tree. 'Oh, Mr. Carlo,' he cried, 'Have you seen my mother's comb?'

" 'Sure!' said Carlo, opening one eye, 'Lots of times,

On her head,
Bright and red.'

" 'Oh no!' said Peter Singlecomb, 'Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it! Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it!' and away he ran without waiting for a reply.

"As fast as his yellow legs would carry him he went to the dim and dusky barn, and called to the pigeons that live under the roof, 'Oh, Flutter-wings, have you seen my mother's comb?'

"The pigeons made soft burbly noises in their throats, then they said, 'Surely, lots of times,

On her head,
Bright and red.'

" 'Oh, no,' said Peter Singlecomb, 'Ca-daw-

cut, she's lost it! Ca-daw cut, she's lost it!' and away he ran without waiting for a reply.

"Away in the green meadow he spied the spotted cow, and he ran to her as fast as his yellow legs would carry him. 'Oh, Mrs. Buttercup, have you seen my mother's comb?'

"The cow turned her cud over and over and over so long that he thought she never would answer, then she said, 'Yes, lots of times,

On her head,
Bright and red.'

" 'Oh, no,' said Peter Singlecomb, 'Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it! Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it!' and away he ran. He went to every animal on the farm and at last the sun began to go down. The black shadows all yelled 'Boo!' at him, and he hurried to the hen house. His yellow legs were very tired and he hadn't found his mother's comb.

"When he got almost home his mother bounced out to meet him, and

On her head,
Bright and red,

was her comb. Peter stared and stared. 'Why, you've got your comb!'

" 'Of course I have, silly!' His mother was very cross. 'Where have you been all day?'

" 'Why the guinea hen said you had lost your comb, and I've been hunting for it.'

"His mother never said a word. With her strong yellow bill she just picked him up and set him on the roost, thump! 'Of all the gooses, Peter Singlecomb, you'll never hear the last of this!'

"And he never did. Wherever he went his brothers and sisters used to snicker, 'Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it! Ca-daw-cut, she's lost it!' "

Mother Speckle-hen waited a whole minute, then Tomboy-chick said, "Ca-daw—" and went to sleep right in the middle of it. Somebody else said, "Chrrr, chrrr," and then all was quiet, so Mother Speckle-hen tucked her head under her wing, and she slept too.

FLEETFOOT'S FIRST SHOES

GENTLE Mother Fleetfoot Horse and her baby, Jim Dandy, stood in the green meadow and watched the round red sun slip down the slot behind the hill. Jim Dandy stood close behind his mother, and every time she switched her tail she brushed the flies off him too. His own little whisk wouldn't reach half over him and he knew it. He was a bright little fellow.

"There," said Mother Fleetfoot, as the sun

dropped out of sight, "There goes the old heat maker. Now the flies will go to bed, and we can have some peace. We'll take a nap, and then we'll go and get some clover."

Jim Dandy galloped all the way around his mother and kicked up his heels. "I don't want to take a nap. I ain't sleepy."

"No," said his mother, "I don't suppose you are. You haven't fought flies all day, and haven't I had to switch them off us both?" She began to lie down, hind legs first, then front legs, just like folding up.

Jim Dandy hippity-hopped around her. "I suppose you have," he said, "But I can't help it. If I was grown up, I'd take care of myself."

"If you were grown up!" said Mother Fleetfoot. "That makes me think of when I was a colt."

"Ooh," Jim Dandy stopped prancing, "Tell me about when you were a colt!" He came over and lay down, hind legs first, then front legs, just exactly like his mother.

"Well," said Mother Fleetfoot, "I must have been a funny little scamp. I was always wishing that I was grown up. I used to go all 'round the farm asking the animals, 'How soon will I be grown up?'

"And they'd say, 'Oh, soon enough,' or 'Oh, too soon,' but when I asked my mother she'd always say, 'You'll be grown up when you get your first shoes.'

"I suppose Jack and Peter and Emily put the idea into my head for they were always asking their father, 'When will Fleetfoot be grown up and we can drive her?' That made me think about it. A harness, a wagon with shiny wheels to go 'round, and iron shoes to go click, click, on the hard road! Oh my! I could hardly wait.

"One day my master hitched my mother to the phaeton. I watched him fasten all the straps. And when my mother started down the drive she whinnied, 'You be good while I'm gone!'

"'I want to go with you!' I whinnied and I galloped after her.

"My master seemed to understand, for he said, 'Do you want to go, Fleetfoot? Well you can. We're only going to the next farm.' So I trotted beside my mother, and a great fuss she made with her whinnying, 'Keep out of the road! Keep away from the fence! Look out for that dog now!' I couldn't do a thing to suit her.

"But I found out something. When my mother got on the hard road her feet began to clang a song.

'Iron shoes work,
No task they shirk!
Iron shoes work,
No task they shirk!'

And I said to my mother, 'Listen to your feet. They sing a song.'

"She said, 'Oh, yes, that is the horse's song. Every good horse has sung that song since days and nights began.'

"'Will my feet sing it?'

" 'Yes, as soon as you get your first shoes.'

"I tried it on the way back. I brought my feet down on the road as hard as I could, but it wasn't any use. They only tap, tap, tapped. Old Tom and Dicky, the farm horses, leaned over the fence and snickered,

'Patter, patter, patter,
Colt's hoofs don't matter!'

Weren't they mean? I was mad. I just tipped up my heels at them, but my mother said, 'Careful of your manners, young colt! Do you want to be a little beast?'

"My mother said it would be only four years until I would have my shoes, but it seemed a long while. I couldn't do arithmetic, so every time I had a birthday I'd say, 'Now how long? Now how long?' Finally I was four years old and my mother said, 'Any time now.' I was nearly as tall as she was.

"My master used to put the harness on me once in a while, and say, 'Does it feel queer, Fleetfoot?' or 'Is it too tight?' Then he'd fix the buckles and pat me and lead me 'round.

One day he hitched me beside my mother and let me help trundle the empty wagon up and down the road. Wasn't I proud? I wanted to show him how fast I could go, but he kept saying, 'Easy, little girl, easy!' until I knew how all the straps felt and how the wagon sounded. Then we trotted a little.

"Peter and Jack and Emily sat on the fence and watched us go by. They said I did beautifully.

"I said to my mother, 'Now I am grown up!' but she said,

" 'No, not until you get your shoes.' I tell you it was hard to wait.

"One morning my master came to the barn early, and he said to my mother, 'Come on, Dolly, we'll have this young lady's shoes put on today.' I wanted to dance, but I knew I must keep still while I was being harnessed. Inside I was all a-tremble.

"My mother and I went out of the gate and down the long road and over the hill where I'd never been before.

"Old Tom and Dicky watched us go. They snickered,

'Patter, patter, patter,
Colt's hoofs don't matter!'

"I whinnied, 'You wait 'till I get back!'

"We got to the blacksmith shop, all full of strange noises, clings and clangs and flying sparks. My master said, 'Here's a little lady come for her first shoes,' and the blacksmith heated them red hot and pounded them into shape, and then he fitted them to my feet. It did feel queer. They were so hot that they made my hoofs smoke, and it jarred terribly hammering in the nails; but my master kept saying, 'It's all right! It's all right!'

"My mother whinnied, 'Just hold still. It won't hurt!'

"I wished I was home. I tried to keep thinking, 'New shoes, new shoes,' but the heat and the hammering were too much for me. I began to dance, and the blacksmith couldn't hold my feet. 'I guess you'll have to put a twister on her,' he said. My master put a loop

of rope on my upper lip and twisted it tight, and if I moved it hurt, so you see I had to hold still. I was ashamed, but I really couldn't help it. Well, finally the shoes were on. Heavy? They felt like lead.

"At last we started home and on the hard road my new shoes began to sing the horses' song.

'Iron shoes work,
No task they shirk!'

"My mother said, 'Now you *are* grown up, my little Fleetfoot.'

"When we got home I said to Old Tom and Dicky, 'See my new shoes?'

"They only said, 'Huh,' and 'Haw!' Weren't they mean?

"But Jack and Peter and Emily hung over the fence and yelled, 'See Fleetfoot's new shoes! See Fleetfoot's new shoes! Now she's a really truly grown-up!' "

Little Jim Dandy sighed. "How long before I'll be grown up, Mother?"

"Dear me!" said Mother Fleetfoot. "Have

you caught the fever? I ought not to have told you about that. You'll be grown up soon enough." Then she said, "Listen!"

Jim Dandy pointed his ears, "What?"

Down by the pond the frogs were singing, "Sleep, sleep, sleep," and their cousins on the other bank were answering, "Deep, deep, deep."

"That's good advice," said Mother Fleetfoot. "We'll just take forty winks and then we'll go and get some clover with the dew on it, sweet as honey."

Jim Dandy nodded. "Yes," he said drowsily, "But I wish I was grown up!"

ROVER, COME OVER!

YOUNG Carlo lay on the grass with his paws over his eyes. "I don't care," he sniffed in a voice muffled by his fur. "There's too many mustn'ts!"

"Now what have you done?" said his Uncle Towzer.

"Nuffin'! Only chased the ducks. I didn't hurt 'em, but the nasty old things yelled, 'Quack, quack, help, help!' and Farmer Dell came running and I got a thrashing."

Uncle Towzer laughed. "Yes, there's quite a few mustn'ts. I remember I had a terrible time with them myself, but what *are* you going to do if you want to grow up to be a good farm dog?"

Little Carlo sat up and scratched his ear with his hind foot. "Dunno! Learn 'em, I s'pose."

"That's it," said Towzer. "Did you ever hear about Rover?"

"No," Carlo settled down and put his little white nose on his yellow paws.

"Well, from all accounts he was just such a young wag as you are. He chased the chickens and ducks.

'Bow, wow, wow,
Look out there now!'

he'd yell, and then he'd bounce at them. Of course they'd run and fly, squackety-squack, and quackety-quack, and he thought it was great fun.

"And the cats! They hardly dared put a foot to the ground. The minute they stepped outside the barn, it was

'Bow, wow, wow,
Look out there now!'

and away they had to go, and scratch up a tree or a fence post for the dear life. Then they'd glare down at him and hiss,

" 'Think you're s-s-smart, don't you, meow!'

"Afternoons when his master would call, 'Here, Rover, Rover, Rover! Go get the cows!' if he didn't feel like coming he'd hide in the bushes; but if he felt like a jolly good race, he'd go flying to the swamp, and bow-wow, nip, nip, in a minute he'd have all the cows running up the lane. The poor fat ladies would puff and pant and say, 'Mooo, don't run us so-o-o!'

"But Rover would bark,

'Bow, wow, wow,
Get along there now!'

"Bow, Wow, Wow, Look Out There Now!"

and chase them all the harder. When they got to the barn Rover would sit down and pant and laugh, and his master would shake his fist and say he'd like to thrash him, but Rover kept out of reach.

"On churning days Rover always ran away if he could, and went without breakfast, dinner and supper rather than run the churn. Usually Jimmie caught him the night before and tied him up, for if Rover wasn't there, Jimmie had to run the churn himself.

"Then the next morning Jimmie and Mary would have to drag him up on to the treadmill of the churn and tie him fast, and he would turn the treadmill just as slow as he dared, and the butter would be a terribly long time coming. Mary would come down once in a while to see about it, and Rover would rumble and grumble until she'd say, 'My, what a cross patch!' That's the kind of dog he was!

"After a while it seemed to Rover that things weren't going so well. Twice his master caught him and gave him a terrible beating for

running the cows. My, how the stick did come down on his ribs! It made him yell, 'Ow, ow! Stop, stop!' but his master didn't stop until he thought he had taught Rover a good lesson.

"And a good many times the hired man clipped him with a stone just as he was starting the chickens on a fine long chase. It made him squeal, 'I-yi!'

"Then it seemed to him that Jimmie and Mary didn't like him so well. If he went and put his nose in Jimmie's hand and looked up with eyes that said, 'I love you!' Jimmie drew his hand away. 'Oh, no, you don't love me, Rover, or you wouldn't sneak out of the churning. Every time you sneak I have to do it, and then I'm late to school and get kept in. You don't love me.'

"And Mary said, 'Oh no, you don't love me, or you wouldn't snarl when I come for the butter, and you wouldn't be so mean to my dear Jimmie!'

"It was the same all around the farm. The animals whispered together when they saw him

coming, 'There's that terrible Rover!' and slid out of the way. Chickens, ducks, guineas, cats, pigs, cows, colts, it was all the same. Rover found he hadn't a friend on the place. He moped about it a good deal. 'Nobody loves me!' he grumbled, and a tiny bird in a tree said,

" 'It's your own fault, Rover!'

"One evening Rover was lying on the lawn, keeping an eye on old Mrs. Malty who was up in the maple tree hissing like a tea kettle. His master came out on the porch and sat down in the rocking chair. 'Look!' he said to Jimmie and Mary, 'There's that good-for-nothing Rover. He's got Malty up in that tree and won't let her come down. Now if I should call him, he'd come over here and look up at me as much as to say, "What is it? I ain't doing a thing!" '

"Rover stuck out his tongue and laughed, for it was just exactly true, but he stopped short when he heard what his master said next.

" 'Yes, sir,' he said, 'He doesn't amount to a thing. I've a good notion to get rid of him. I

know every young dog must have his fun, but Rover doesn't settle down. He's a year old and he hasn't any sense yet. I think I'll get another dog.'

"Mary said, 'But Daddy, he's lots of fun to play with!'

" 'Yes,' said her father, 'but that's not a farm dog's job. I must say I am disappointed in him. His father was the best dog we ever had. I thought Rover would be like him.'

"Rover forgot all about Malty. He slunk away under the lilac bush, and wasn't he ashamed? 'Ooh,' he whimpered, 'I never thought about it that way before. And I never thought about being sent away. I can't have another dog snuff-snuffing about my farm. And everything's all wrong anyhow! I get beatings and thumps with stones. All the animals hate me, and Jimmie and Mary won't have anything to do with me! What shall I do? What shall I do?' He felt so bad that he sat down and pointed his nose at the moon and said, 'Ooh! Oooh!'

"After a while he thought, 'If I should be a better dog, maybe they'd let me stay. I'll try! I'll begin tomorrow morning. I'll be an angel-dog if they'll only let me stay!'

"The next morning he woke up just as the sun poked his red face up over the hill. Rover was on his feet in a flash. 'Churning day! I must get out of here!' Then he remembered. 'Dear me!' he said, 'I suppose I've got to do it. This is my first chance to be good.' So he went around to the kitchen door and waited, and pretty soon Jimmie came out and said, 'Here you!' and made a dive for him, 'I thought you'd be gone sure. I forgot to tie you up last night.' But Rover didn't try to run away. He put his nose in Jimmie's hand and wagged his tail and said, 'I'll do the churning, Jimmie,' just as plain as he could.

"Jimmie understood. 'My goodness, Rover,' he said, 'You must have turned over a new leaf.' He put Rover on the treadmill and Rover pulled steady, steady, and the churn dasher went k-splash, k-splash, and in no time

the butter had come. Mary came down and dipped it out, and there wasn't a growl in Rover. He wagged his tail and lifted his ears, 'Ain't I good, Mary?'

"And Mary said, 'What a nice fellow!' and gave him a whole hot cruller.

"Then Rover went out and walked around the barnyard. He saw Mrs. Speckle-hen and her chicks over by the fence. She was very fussy and nervous. She spread her skirts and said, 'Cluck, cluck, children! There's that terrible Rover. We must get away or he'll chase us!'

"Rover called, 'No, Madam, I wouldn't chase you for anything!' but she didn't believe him and slid under the fence and all her babies with her. The farmer saw him though, and he said, 'Good dog, Rover,' and gave him a pat.

" 'My,' Rover thought, 'It isn't so bad being good. Everybody seems to like me better already.'

"He went to the barn. Mrs. Malty had just finished her breakfast and was sitting in the

cat's door washing her face and whiskers. 'Come on out, Mrs. Malty,' said Rover, 'I don't chase cats any more. I'm a good dog now.'

"'Sssspit!' said Mrs. Malty scornfully, 'There's no such animal!'

"'There isn't, eh!' Rover was mad. He began to walk up, very stiff. 'Do you mean to say——'

"'Meaw, meaw,' said Mrs. Malty, mocking Rover, 'Come on out, dearie! I won't chase you!'

"Rover made a dive and stuck his head in the cat's door, but Mrs. Malty was gone. 'Meaw, meaw,' he heard her laughing up in the hay mow.

"He backed out and shook himself. 'Well, I did slip a little then. I hope nobody saw me, but I guess cats don't count so much. Of all the impertinent animals!'

"That afternoon Rover took a long nap on the doormat. When he woke up the old red sun was beginning to drop his head down for the night. ''Bout time to get the cows,'

yawned Rover. Then he heard, away off,

'Yoo hoo, Rover!
Come on over!'

There were Jimmie and Mary on the other hill coming home from school. They waved their books,

'Yoo hoo, Rover!
Come on over!'

Rover dashed for the gate. Just then he heard the farmer's voice,

" 'Come Rover, Rover, Rover! Go get the cows!'

"Rover's tail dropped. 'Dear me!' he said. 'What shall I do? If I go to meet them I'll be too late for the cows. If I go for the cows, they'll be here before I get back. Well, I said I'd be good. I'll stick to it.' So he turned and went to the barn and never looked behind him. Down to the swamp he trotted,

'Bow, wow, wow,
Come home now!'

He said it so politely that the cows all looked around.

"They said,

'Mooo,
What's come over yooo?'

" 'Oh, nothing!' said Rover. He wasn't going to tell his troubles to a cow. He walked behind them all the way to the barn, his tail waving like a flag. The farmer could hardly believe his eyes. Rover went right to him. He put his warm nose in the farmer's palm and looked up and said, 'Ain't I a good dog? Can't I stay?'

"The farmer understood. He patted Rover's head. 'Well, well, Rover,' he said, 'You've been a good dog today and no mistake. You keep on like this, and you'll be just like your father. Then I won't think of getting another dog.'

"Rover's heart went pitty pat, and his tail went thump, thump, thump. He put his paws on the farmer's breast. 'I'll keep on!' he said just as plain as words. And he did."

"And never chased nothing, not even cats?" said little Carlo.

"Oh, maybe a cat once in a while," said Uncle Towzer. "They don't count exactly."

"There's Nigger by the fence, come on!" said Carlo.

Yip! Bow! Away they went.

"Ssspit!" said Nigger on the fence post. "I heard your story. Talk about good dogs! There's no such animal!"

"Yip! Bow! Yes there is!" said Carlo and Towzer.

GRANDFATHER GOBBLER

MRS. BRONZE-WING TURKEY led her five children along the edge of the oats field. "Here's a good place for bugs," she said.

"Tweet, tweet, yes, yes," said the little turkeys. They searched between the yellow stalks and looked up at the oats heads nodding above them.

"I wish we could reach the oats," said the fattest baby turkey.

"And all have the colic?" said Mrs. Bronze-wing. "Bugs are better. Come along!"

"Tweet, tweet, see the funny tree, all split to pieces," said the fattest turkey as they passed the old oak in the fence corner.

"Yes," said Mrs. Bronze-wing. "The lightning did that. I suppose I was right near here when it happened, but I was so little that I don't remember. I've heard my mother, that's your Grandmother, tell about it, though."

"Oh, how did it happen?"

"Well, your Grandmother said it was your Grandfather Gobbler's fault, and it was a mercy we weren't killed. Your Grandfather Gobbler was a handsome strutter, but sometimes he used poor judgment.

"It was a terribly hot July afternoon, with great fluffy thunderheads all around the sky, and she was afraid of showers, but your Grandfather insisted that nothing would do but to take a long walk.

"She said she told him, 'It's no time to go walking. You know the children are feeling a little peaked growing their wing feathers, and if they should get wet it would go very hard with them.'

"But he said, 'Gobble, gobble, gobble, old fuss-feathers! It isn't going to rain. Come on!' He spread his tail and dropped his wings and strutted, and all the children wanted to go, so your Grandmother gave in.

"When they went by the barn, Harry, the boy who took care of them, came out. He called, 'Don't go far, old birds! There's going to be a shower. You know what'll happen to your babies if they get wet. It'll kill them!'

"Your Grandmother said, 'See? Harry thinks so, too!' but Grandfather only said,

" 'Gobble, gobble, nonsense!'

"They went up along the lane to the very back of the farm. She kept an eye on the clouds all the time, and they piled up higher and higher, and once in a while there was just

a wink of lightning. She said she was in such a state of mind that she couldn't eat a bug, but every time she said anything your Grandfather Gobbler said, 'Gobble, gobble, pooh, pooh! What a woman!'

"Well, after a while the light got sort of green, and away off she heard rumble, rumble, rumble, and she said, "Come, children, I'm going home. I've had enough of this foolishness. It's going to rain, and it's going to rain soon!' so they hurried across the fields.

"The light got greener and greener, and the rumbles louder and louder, and then little puffs of wind kicked up the dust and ruffled their feathers and Grandfather Gobbler said, 'Well, maybe it will rain a leetle. Hurry up, children, hurry up!'

"And your Grandmother said, 'Gobbler, if the children get wet and die, I'll never forgive you!'

"When they got to this fence where the oak tree is, they saw Harry coming as fast as he could. He was worried about them. He was

calling, 'Hurry up, hurry up!' but there was no need to tell them that.

"Just as Harry got to them a big drop struck a leaf, spat, and another and another, and you could hear the wind and rain roaring over the hill. There wasn't any time to get to the barn, but right near by was a big rye stack, and all 'round the bottom it was hollowed out where the cows had nibbled at it.

"Your Grandmother said Harry grabbed two or three of the chicks and she followed with the rest, and they ran for it. She called to your Grandfather Gobbler to come on, but he was huffy and said he'd stop under the oak tree, and something about 'no boy was going to hustle him,' and she lost sight of him. Harry pawed a hole out deeper and put the baby turkeys inside, and he and your grandmother squatted between them and the rain. Then flash, crash, roar, came the shower. It poured. The water sluiced off the rye stack in a silver sheet. She and Harry got spattered some, but they kept the babies dry.

"Well, it began to get lighter and the rain slowed, and Harry had started to say that it was nearly over, when, flash! They felt as if their eyeballs were burned up in their heads, and snap, crackle, crackle, crackle, roar, roar, roar, they knew that the lightning had struck nearby.

"Your Grandmother said that Harry was as white as a sheet. He said, 'Guy, that was close!' and she began to worry about her poor, foolish husband out there somewheres in the rain.

"In a minute they could see, and there was the oak split from top to bottom, and on the ground under it was a little black speck. She said she yelled to the children to stay where they were, and she ran as fast as she could. There lay your Grandfather Gobbler so still that she thought he was dead. She said she cried, 'Oh dear, oh dear, oh dear,' and finally he opened one eye and he said,

" 'G-g-g-gobble, where am I?'

"Well, some of his feathers were pulled out, and the rest were singed, and his pretty red wattles were all black. Such a looking bird! He couldn't stand on his feet. Harry had to carry him to the house. Harry said it was a miracle that he wasn't killed, either by the lightning or by the falling limbs, for the tree was torn to pieces just as you see it now."

The little turkeys looked up at the tattered branches and shook their heads. "That was a terrible lesson," they said.

"Yes," said their mother, "The old gentleman never was so keen about walking afterwards. Your Grandmother could hardly get him away from the barnyard. He'd shake his head and say, 'Gobble, gobble, no, my dear. I think it looks like a shower!' "

"And you don't remember it at all?"

"No, I was too little."

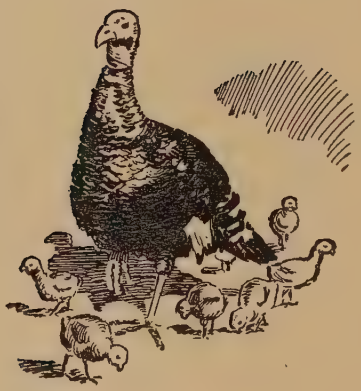
"And you didn't get wet and get sick?"

"No."

"And—oh, there's a bug, a big bug!" said the

fattest little turkey, and away he went and all the others after him.

Mrs. Bronze-wing looked up at the oak tree and shook her head. "Yes, a terrible lesson!"



BUTTERCUP OF CHERRY FARM

MRS. BUTTERCUP, the fat lady cow, licked her baby's hair until it stood up this way and that way. "There now," she said, "You are beautiful enough to go to the county fair."

Mrs. Buttercup's baby's name was Daisy, and she was spotted black and white just like her mother. "Did you ever go to the county fair?" she said.

"Yes, and I brought home the blue ribbon," Mrs. Buttercup tossed her head proudly.

"The blue ribbon? I never saw you wear it. Where is it?"

"Oh, it's not to wear. It's a prize, the highest

prize they give. Our master has it hung up in the house, and he shows it to everybody who comes here. Haven't you heard him say, 'Here's our prize Holstein that won the blue ribbon?' That's me!" She swelled herself up.

"Tell me how you won the blue ribbon!" said Daisy and poked her mother in the side.

"Oh, that's a long story," said Mrs. Buttercup, "Come over in the shade." So they ambled over to the maple tree and lay down cow fashion, first on their front knees and then their hind legs. They looked as if they said a little prayer.

Mother Buttercup got out her cud and rolled it and rolled it.

"Hurry up and begin!" said Daisy.

Mother Buttercup tucked her cud away in her throat again. "Well," she said, "It began when I was a little calf only two hours old. My master came and looked me all over. 'You're a beauty,' he said. 'You must grow as fast as you can and I'll take you to the county fair.'

Daisy Was Spotted Black and White Just Like Her Mother.

"I asked my mother afterwards, 'How can I grow fast?' and she said 'Eat all you can.' So I ate 'till I thought I'd burst. My sides were round and hard as a drum.

"My master patted me and said, 'That's right! That's right!' At first I had milk, but soon I had calf meal mixed with milk in a big pail. I'd eat and eat, and when the pail was empty I'd tip it up upside down on my head to show that every drop was gone.

"One day my master opened the barnyard gate and said, 'Now Buttercup, go with your mother to the meadow!' and we went out into the loveliest meadow you ever saw, with long tender grass, and a brook and maple trees along the side. My mother said,

" 'Run and skip, little Buttercup, if you want to grow fast.' So I ran and skipped, and tasted of the green grass, and when I was tired I lay in the shade of the trees and rested. Then I ran and skipped some more.

"My master came and looked over the fence and said, 'That's right, Buttercup, that's right!

You'll take the prize at the fair!' I could just feel myself grow.

"After a few days my master took my mother away, not far though, but I did miss her. I bawled, 'Mooo, Mother!' and she answered, 'Mooo, where are yooo?' I hunted and hunted but I couldn't find her.

"The next day I saw her in the field across the lane and she came to the fence and called, 'Mooo, how are yooo?'

"And I ran to my fence and called, 'Mooo, I'm lonesome!'

"She said, 'Now don't fret, or you won't grow fast and win the prize at the county fair.' I'd almost forgotten about the prize. Of course I stopped fretting. I ate and I pranced and I slept in the shade, and I grew and grew. I could tell that I grew, for there was a bar across our shed door, and at first I could trot right under it. Then it got so that it scraped my back, and finally it bumped so hard that I had to get down on my knees to get under it. My master raised the bar higher, and he

laughed and scratched my head and said, 'That's right, Buttercup! Grow as fast as you can. We'll show them at the county fair!'

"Pretty soon he began to brush me every day. He said that ladies must have silky coats to go to the fair. I got sort of tired of it, and I lifted my foot and kind of thought about kicking, but he said, 'Now, now! No cow is a lady unless she has nice manners!' and then I put my foot down.

"My mother came to my fence every day and told me about how I must behave at the fair. 'You must be a little lady and do anything they ask you. When the judges who give out the prizes come along, you must stand up straight and proud just as if you were saying, 'I'm Buttercup from Cherry Farm! Don't you think I'm handsome enough to win the blue ribbon?'

" 'The judges will look you all over and you must let them do whatever they like, look in your mouth or your eyes, and feel of your back and your joints. Never mind if it does tickle.

And if they want you to walk, don't pull back. Then they will know that you are gentle and well bred. Be courteous to the other animals!' My mother sighed, 'I wish I could go with you, but I'm too old.' She turned away and began to eat grass. I think she was almost crying.

"When I was a year old my master came to the pasture and said, "The county fair's tomorrow!' I galloped, hippity hip, hippity hip, all the way 'round the meadow with my tail straight up, I was so glad.

"Then he washed me and brushed me until I shone like a bottle, and he put a big crate on his wagon for me to ride in, and some boards up to it so that I could walk up into it. My mother came to the fence and leaned over. 'Step up like a lady,' she called, so I climbed right in. Then she said, 'Remember your manners! Be gentle and do whatever they ask!'

"And I said, 'Mooo, yes! Good bye!'

"She said, 'Mooo, good bye, and good luck, my little calf! Bring home the blue ribbon!'

and away we went.

"When we got to the county fair,
'All the birds and beasts were there.'

You never heard so much noise; calves bawling for their mammas, mammas calling for their calves; horses whinnying and colts nickering; pigs squealing and grunting, 'I want to go home! I want to go home!'; chickens crowing and cackling; pigeons burbling, and animals I never had seen before.

"My master put me in a stall all by myself and gave me hay. The calves on each side craned their heads over and said, 'Mooo, who are yooo?'

"I stood up straight and I said, 'I'm Buttercup from Cherry Farm,' just as my mother'd told me.

"They said, 'Mmmh!' very short and snooty, and one calf said, 'I'm suah I nevah hehd of that playuce!' I wanted to laugh.

"Early next morning some nice men came. They were the judges. I stood up straight and proud and so did the other calves. They looked

us all over, and I remembered what my mother said and I let them do what they liked. I held as still as a mouse. I walked up and down like a lady, but the calf who had said she'd never heard of Cherry Farm wouldn't budge, and the calf on the other side had to be pulled and hauled along, so I had my opinion of them.

"The judges went away and we waited and waited. The calf on my left said, 'I expect to get the blue ribbon. They admiahed my head.'

"The calf on my right said, 'Huh, that's nothing. They said I had a beautiful body and legs.' I didn't say anything. It didn't seem nice manners to me.

"After a while the nice men came back, and on the stall at my right they pinned a red ribbon, and away down the line they pinned another red ribbon. Then they came back and one of them said, 'Where's Buttercup of Cherry Farm?'

"And I forgot and said right out loud, 'Mooo, here I am!' I almost burst. On my stall they pinned the blue ribbon.

"My master could hardly speak. I heard him say sort of husky, 'You don't know how much this means to me, a young fellow trying to get a start!' and he shook hands with everybody. Then he came over and patted me and bent down and made believe to fix my halter, and he whispered, 'Bless your heart, Buttercup!'

"We went home the next day. It was after dark when we got there, but I could see my mother leaning over the fence. She called, 'Mooo?'

"And I answered, 'Mooo! I got it! I got it!' and I hippity-hopped right up and down in the wagon.

"My master had my picture taken and under it he wrote, Buttercup of Cherry Farm, and he pinned my blue ribbon on it, and had it framed. I saw it before he hung it up in the parlor."

Mother Buttercup got out her cud and began to chew it again.

Daisy drew a long breath. "Wasn't it nice! You were a year old, Mother?"

"Mmm."

"Then I've got almost a year to wait, haven't I?"

Mother Buttercup laughed. "Don't be in too much of a hurry. You've got a lot of growing to do before then. You'd better begin by resting now."

Little Daisy shut her eyes. "All right, Mother. I'll rest hard!" she said.

TWINKLEPAWS AND HIS WHISKERS

GRANNY GRAY-CAT was having a hard time. She had promised her daughter, Mrs. Malty, that she would mind the kittens while she went to the Rat-Catchers Club. "Dear me!" sighed Granny Gray-cat, "I wish I hadn't said I'd do it. I'm all worn out and she hasn't been gone ten minutes. Here I've clawed Frolic tail-first out of the drain pipe. I've screamed just in time to keep Frisk from being stepped on by the horse, and now I haven't seen Tumble and Whisk for ever so long. Where can they be? Meouch!" cried

poor Granny, for Tumble and Whisk had come up behind her and pounced on her tail.

Granny Gray-cat turned like a flash and made her paw into a little furry fist. Biff, biff, she boxed the kittens and set them down hard beside her. "Will you behave?" Then she called softly "Prrr-meow? Prrr-meow?"

Frolic and Frisk came flying, "What is it? What is it?"

"Sit down and keep quiet!"

"Dear me," said Frolic, "I thought it was at least a mouse. I almost had one myself." Frolic's whiskers were full of cobwebs where he had poked his head into a hole.

"Almost had a mouse, and he couldn't catch a fly!" laughed Frisk. Frisk's fur was covered with feed.

"You've been in the feed bin," said Granny severely. "Don't you know Farmer Dell keeps traps in there for the rats? You might have lost your toes."

The kittens began to sneak away.

"Come back!" said Granny, "Come back!

No more antics! You sit right here by me!" so the kittens had to come back, and they and Granny Gray-cat sat in a row on the barn door sill and looked the dusky barnyard over.

"See that shadow move by the fence?" whispered Granny. "That's that good-for-nothing fox terrier, Grunter. If he comes this way, climb the beams!" But Grunter didn't come. He slid along the fence and was gone.

"Maybe he's after rats for once in his life," said Granny Gray-cat, and the four kittens laughed without making a sound. You never could tell about Grunter. He might be under the door sill that very minute. Granny craned her neck and looked over. "It's all right," she said. "Now if I tell you a story, will you keep quiet?"

"Mew, mew, yes, yes," said the four baby cats.

Frolic said, "Do you know about Twinklepaws? Our mother often tells us about Twinklepaws."

"Of course I do," said Granny, "I used to

tell that story to your mother when she was a kit."

"Oh mew, mew, mew, tell us!" said the four little cats.

"Well, let me see. Once long ago there was a handsome young cat by the name of Twinklepaws. The children on his farm had named him that because he had white feet and when he ran they said his feet twinkled. He had a white shirt front, too, and a white nose and whiskers. The rest of him was black. He was quite proud of himself.

"The children petted him a great deal, and one day when he was lying on Bessie's lap, Tom came along and took hold of Twinklepaws' white mustaches and pulled them out straight and said, 'Did you ever hear that cats measure holes with their whiskers? If their whiskers just fit the hole they know that they can go through it.'

"Twinklepaws sat up and cocked his ears. 'Mercy on us,' he purred. 'Is that so? I never heard of that before. I wonder why my mother

never told me?' and he hopped right off Bessie's lap to go and find a hole to try. He tried the cat hole in the barn door which he knew perfectly well he could go through, and sure enough his whiskers just fitted. He tried the old rat hole in the floor, which he had been through one hundred and ninety-nine times, and sure enough, his whiskers just fitted. 'Well, well,' he said, 'It must be true.'

"In the foundation wall of the barn was a drain. It was a cobwebby old thing. Nobody used it but the rats. It was a fine place to catch rats because you could sit beside it and when they stuck their heads out, pounce, you had them. Twinklepaws happened to see it. 'That would be a good hole to try,' he thought, so he stuck his head in very cautiously and measured. 'Well,' he said, rolling his eyes so that he could see his whiskers, 'The tips do bend just a teeny weeny bit, but not enough to hurt, I guess.' So he began to crawl into the drain. It was a pretty tight fit. He had to scrooch, but that didn't matter. He wriggled along

smelling rats stronger and stronger all the way. 'Oh, my paws and whiskers!' he thought. 'I bet I'll catch forty.' He was a great ratter.

"He got along nicely until he came to a bend in the drain, and there he was, stuck. 'Mercy on us,' he thought, 'How can whiskers measure a bend? Well, I'll back up!' but he couldn't back up. Then he knew that he was in a bad hole. He began to cry, 'Let me-out! Let me-out! Let me-out!' He listened but nobody answered. 'Let me-out! Me-out! Me-out!' but nobody heard him. All the cats had gone hunting field mice.

"While Twinklepaws was listening an old gray rat ran round the bend in the drain full tilt, and when he saw Twinklepaws' two green eyes in the dark, it gave him a terrible start. He nearly fainted. He thought his time had come. He begged for mercy, 'Eeeee, Mr. Twinklepaws, spare meee! I'll never eat corn, I'll never bother kittens again. Eeee!'

" 'Oh, Mr. Rat, help me-out, me-out, me-out!' said poor Twinkle.

" 'Oh, you're stuck, are you?' said the rat. 'That makes a difference,' and he sat down and scratched his ear right in front of Twinklepaws' nose. 'Can you reach with your paws?'

" 'No,' said poor Twinkle, 'They are stuck fast.'

" 'In that case,' said the rat, 'I'll just give you a good nip to get even for the chase you gave me 'round the granary last Tuesday night,' and he walked right up and pinched Twinklepaws' poor pink nose.

" 'Meouch, meouch, meouch,' squealed Twinklepaws.

" 'This is very serious,' said the gray rat. 'Do you realize that this drain is the only way out of our house? We rats shall have to eat you entirely up before we can get out!'

"At this poor Twinkle made a terrible lunge and got one paw loose. 'You just dare come near me!' he cried. 'Let me-out, let me-out, me-out!'

"When Twinklepaws didn't come to the cow shed for supper, his mother began to

worry. 'Have you seen Twinklepaws?' she asked this one and that one, but nobody had. She hunted up Bessie and Tom and asked them as plainly as she could, 'Meow, meow? Have you seen my Twinklepaws?'

"But they asked her, 'Where is Twinklepaws?' so she knew it was no use.

"She went back to the barn and began to call, 'Prrr-meow? Prrr-meow?' and finally as she went past the drain she heard poor Twinklepaws crying,

" 'Let me-out, me-out, me-out!'

" 'Oh dear, dear, Twinklepaws, are you in the drain?'

" 'And Twinklepaws said, 'Meow, meow, yes. I'm stuck!'

" 'Oh, what shall we do?' said his mother.

" 'The rats are going to eat me up, meow, meow!' said Twinkle.

" 'Dear, dear!' said his mother and she ran to the cow shed, but the farmer had gone and everything was locked up. She ran back to the

drain. 'You'll have to wait 'till morning, Twinklepaws. Then I will tell the farmer.'

" 'Oh, dear, dear, dear,' cried Twinkle. 'The rats will have me all eaten up by then.' But the rats were afraid of his terrible claws. You remember he could move one foot. All night he cried, 'Let me-out, me-out, me-out!'

"In the morning, bright and early, the farmer came to the barn. Twinklepaws' mother met him. She rubbed against his legs and looked up into his face and said, 'Get him-eout, eout!' as plain as she could, and ran to the drain, but the farmer didn't understand. He went to the cow shed and began to milk. All the cats gathered 'round, but Twinklepaws' mother wouldn't drink a drop. Then the farmer said,

" 'Why, Lady, you act queer. Aren't you hungry?'

"Twinklepaws' mother ran towards the door and cried piteously, 'Get him-eout, get him-eout!'

"The farmer began to look around. 'Why,

Twinklepaws isn't here,' he said, 'nor he wasn't last night. Is that it?'

"And Lady just cried, 'Get him-eout, get him-eout!'

"The farmer got up from the stool. 'Where is he?' And he followed Twinklepaws' mother to the drain.

"Twinklepaws was having a terrible time in the drain. He was nearly wild with hunger and thirst, and so were the rats. They were crowding towards him and the ones in back were squealing, 'Eat up the cat! Eat up the cat!' The old gray rat made a dash and bit him.

" ' Meouch, meouch, meouch,' cried Twinklepaws, and the farmer heard him.

'Why, Lady, Twinklepaws is in the drain! The poor fellow!' said the farmer. 'We'll soon get him out.' And he went and got an axe and took up the boards in the barn floor. Then he listened until he heard just where Twinklepaws was, and he cracked the pipe very carefully and lifted him out.

"Oh, how glad Twinklepaws was! He lay in the farmer's arms and purred, 'Thank you, thank you, thank you!' as loud as he could. And then he had warm milk for his breakfast.

"When it was all over and he and his mother were washing themselves in the sun, his mother said, 'Now I want to know how you ever came to go into that old drain.'

" 'Well,' said Twinklepaws, 'Bessie and Tom told me that a cat could go through any hole his whiskers would go through.'

" 'Humph!' said his mother, 'And you believed it?'

"Twinklepaws said, 'Well, you see they didn't know about the bend.'

" 'No,' said his mother, 'Of course not. They meant well, but their information wasn't accurate. Now the next time you want information you come to me, young cat! You might have died in that drain.'

" 'Yes,' said Twinkle meekly. 'The rats were going to eat me up.'

" 'Rats?' said Lady, 'Oh yes, I forgot about the rats. Maybe we can catch them.'

"They went over to the hole that the farmer had broken in the drain and listened. Scratch, scratch, scratch, they heard them coming. Pounce! Lady had one. It was the old gray rat. 'Eeee-ee!' he said, and that was the end of him.

"Then Twinklepaws curled up and had a long sleep, and when he woke up he went and found Bessie and Tom, and he said, 'Prrr, prrr, prrr, my mother says your information wasn't accurate.' But they didn't understand.

"They said, 'Poor Twinklepaws, stuck in the drain all night! Don't you ever go in there again!' "

The kittens sighed, then Frolic said, "You told it almost right. Our mother always says, 'Your information is misleading,' and she says Twinklepaws was gray."

"Black!" said Granny Gray-cat firmly.

A voice said, "Prrr-meow? Prrr-meow?" and there was Mrs. Malty.

"Had a nice time, daughter?" said Granny.

"Yes. How were the kittens?"

"Pretty good."

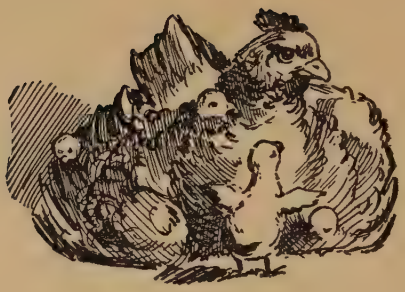
"She told us Twinklepaws," said Frisk.

"Oh, yes," Frolic began——

"Quiet!" said Mrs. Malty, "I think Grunter followed me home."

They listened and heard Grunter snuff-snuffing along the wall.

"To the beams!" cried Mrs. Malty, and up they scrambled. They laughed at Grunter, and their eyes shone like twelve little green lights. Then they all curled up and went to sleep in the hay mow.



MRS. CHICKET

"TAKE a little waaalk? Take a little waaalk?" Mother Speckle-hen called her babies.

"Peep, peep! Yes, yes!" all ten little yellow puff balls came a-flying. They went down the garden path. Mother Speckle-hen waddled along like an old lady in a gray calico dress. Her babies ran away ahead, and not a bug escaped their bright eyes.

"Cluck, cluck, not too far!" called Mrs. Speckle-hen. "There's a pond beyond those bushes." Then she laughed a clucky laugh, "I'd be in a state of mind if you all turned into ducks."

"Turned into ducks! Peep, peep, peep!" said Tomboy-chick.

"Turned into ducks! Peep, peep, peep!" said all the other chicks.

"Is it a story?" said Gentle-chick.

"Yes, a true story," said Mother Speckle-hen, "It happened to a friend of mine. Come under the currant bush, and I'll tell you about it." So they all cuddled down in the dust bath under the currant bush, and Mother Speckle-hen began.

"One springtime Mrs. Chicket was very busy. You wouldn't have thought so to look at her. She just sat and sat and sat, but sitting was her business. Under her soft warm wings were twelve eggs. 'I do hope I'll have a good hatch,' she said, 'My last family was so small it was hardly worth scratching for. These eggs seem large, and they look a little blue, I hope they're not addled. Well, one must have patience,' so Mrs. Chicket sat for three weeks.

"Then one morning she felt a stir and the smallest of voices said, 'Peep, peep, peep?' and

pretty soon other voices said, 'Peep, peep, peep?' and there were ten funny little wet birds for her to dry off and take care of. Only two big blue eggs stayed whole and never said a word though Mrs. Chicket waited for hours. Then the farmer came and lifted her, fussing and clucking, off the nest, put the babies in a basket and carried them all to a nice coop in the garden.

"It had been quite dark in the barn, so Mrs. Chicket didn't get a good look at her family until they were all settled in their new home. 'Ca-daw-cut, mercy me!' she said, 'These children look a little peculiar. Such broad bills, and toes all webbed together! However they'll be all the stronger for snipping grass and scratching.' So she took good care of them and brought them up to have nice manners.

"One day one of her friends, Mrs. Biddy Hen, strolled by. She stopped to chat a minute. When she saw Mrs. Chicket's babies she said, 'Ca-daw-cut, mercy me, Mrs. Chicket!

Your children look peculiar! Such noses and toeses I never saw!'

"Mrs. Chicket flew into a rage, 'Don't you dare to say my children look peculiar! Get out of here, you old trouble-clucker!' and she drove Mrs. Biddy Hen away, but she felt a little uneasy. Yes, they were peculiar.

"The next day along came Mr. Red Rooster.

'Cock-a-doodle-doo!
Mrs. Chicket, how are you?'

he said pompously. 'How many children have you? Ten? A nice little family, a credit to you, I'm sure.' Then he twisted his head sideways and looked at them with one round eye, 'But don't you think they're a little peculiar?'

"'Get out of here, you old flap-doodle!' screamed Mrs. Chicket. 'How dare you call my children peculiar!' and she drove Mr. Red Rooster away, but she felt very much worried. 'As soon as I can I'll take them to the doctor,' she said.

"A few days later Farmer Dell came and

let Mrs. Chicket out of the coop. 'There, old lady,' he said, 'I guess your babies are strong enough to walk around a little. But don't let them get wet or you'll have a surprise,' he chuckled.

"'He thinks I don't know enough to come in out of the rain!' grumbled Mrs. Chicket to herself, then she called to her children. 'Take a little waaalk? Take a little waaalk?'

"They started down the garden path. 'Ca-daw-cut, mercy me,' said Mrs. Chicket, 'How funny my children walk! And ca-daw-cut, mercy me, how funny they talk! We must go to the doctor's right away.'

"Mrs. Chicket's family doctor, old Doctor Plymouth Rocker, lived away across the road by the pond, so Mrs. Chicket led her family that way, scolding and fussing, 'Keep in the path! Don't run so far ahead! Don't go near the water!' but her babies didn't mind very well, and the first thing Mrs. Chicket knew a terrible thing happened. One by one her children slipped into the water and swam away,

HER CHILDREN SLIPPED INTO THE WATER AND SWAM AWAY.

and as they swam they dipped their little bills and said, 'Quack, quack!'

" 'Cawk, cawk, cawk!' screamed Mrs. Chicket, 'Help, help, help!'

"Dr. Plymouth Rocker came running, 'Madam, madam, what is it?'

" 'Ca-daw-cut, ca-daw-cut, my children, my children!' Mrs. Chicket pointed to the pond.

" 'Your children, Madam? Are you sure?' Doctor Plymouth Rocker looked very grave. He felt of her pulse and asked to see her tongue, but she was too busy using it.

" 'Yes, my children, that I hatched out of the beautiful bluish eggs. And now they'll be drowned! Ca-daw-cut, ca-daw-cut!'

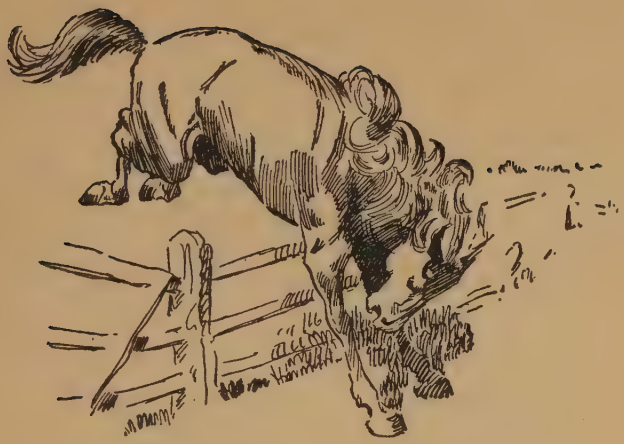
"Doctor Plymouth Rocker took Mrs. Chicket gently by the wing. 'My dear Madam, you must prepare yourself for a fearful blow. Your children are ducks! Someone has played a shameful trick on you!'

" 'Ducks? Ducks?' said Mrs. Chicket, 'Oh Doctor Rocker, I shall never get over this.' "

"Oh Ma! Ma!" burst out Tomboy-chick, "How did it happen?"

"They were ducks all the time, goosie! That's why they looked peculiar. Farmer Dell had given Mrs. Chicket duck eggs to sit on."

"Oh Ma!" said Tomboy-chick, "Just supposing we'd turned out to be ducks!"



OUR FAMOUS HIGH JUMPER

JIM DANDY was in disgrace. He hung his pretty head. From his halter to a strap 'round his front hoof stretched a slender clanking chain. He really had to hang his head, the chain was so short, and he could hardly step, he felt so hampered and clumsy. He hobbled around the pasture and when he heard the pound of hoofs he managed to get over to the fence.

His mother, Mrs. Fleetfoot, came into view trundling the phaeton. She gave a terrible

start when she saw Jim Dandy. "U-huh-huh-huh-huh!" she whinnied. "I told you so!" She went on to the barn with her load, and in a few minutes the hired man let down the bars and she stepped leisurely into the pasture.

Jim Dandy tried to run to meet her, but he could only hobble. She stood still and watched him come, jerk-clank, jerk-clank, slowly across the field. She shook her head, "You are a sight to be proud of! Didn't I tell you what would happen if you kept on jumping fences?"

Jim Dandy wiggled his head. Clank, went the chain.

"Now you're in a nice boat, got to go hobbling about! No more gallops! No more games! And you'll have to be very careful how you even step with that hopple or you'll throw yourself. I did once."

Jim Dandy stopped short. "You? Why Mother, did you jump fences?"

Mother Fleetfoot looked a little ashamed. "There now, I gave myself away, didn't I?" She whisked her tail as if she didn't care and

made believe a fly was biting her terribly. "Yes, I used to jump fences, but I got over it as soon as I got some sense." She started on a trot down the meadow.

Jim Dandy was left far behind. "M-huh-huh-huh, Mother!" he nickered.

"I'll wait for you at the brook," Mother Fleetfoot called, and broke into a gallop, then she kicked up before and behind and trotted down the last steep pitch to the brook.

When Jim Dandy caught up to her she was standing in the shallows with her nose deep in the water. The little brook made crinkles around it, and around her hoofs. She drank great slow gulps and breathed out softly in the water to clear her nose of dust. "There," she said at last, "I feel better. Let's rest under the trees." She suited her pace to Jim Dandy's, and they went slowly back to the row of maples that stood along the fence. There she lay down and rolled luxuriously, all the way over and back again. "Mmmph," she grunted, "That feels good."

Jim Dandy lay down with great caution. "I don't believe I dare roll." he said. "Mother, tell me about when you jumped fences."

Mother Fleetfoot laughed a horse laugh, which doesn't make a sound but means a lot. "Well, it began when I was pretty small. I was light and spry, and I soon found out that I could jump. I went over every fence on the place like a bird. Jack and Peter and Emily made me worse. They used to say, 'See how prettily our Fleetfoot jumps!' and then I'd show off and sail over the fence and back before you could wink your eye.

"My master was so good about it. My mother was very busy that summer and I was alone a lot. He thought maybe I was lonesome, so he drove over to the next farm and asked the farmer if I might stay in his pasture with his colts. He had three, Pepper, Moonshine, and Sleepyhead.

'Mr. Colbert said yes, so the next day my master led me over. He slipped off the halter and gave me a pat. 'Goodbye, Fleetfoot,' he

said, 'Do be a good colt!' and he went back home.

"Pepper and Moonshine and Sleepyhead all came up to me and nickered, and we smelt each other over and got acquainted. Fine times we had, games and gallops, and long talks together; naps at noon in the shade, and long meals of sweet clover at night when the moon was high and the pasture looked like silver. But do you know what I did? I taught all those colts to jump. I'd say, 'Come on, it's easy!' and I'd sail over the fence; then I'd sail back, 'Come on!' One after another they tried it and learned. Then we were into everything, the hay fields, the oats and the corn; the orchards, and even the kitchen garden. We used to run away down the roads, too, and people would see us coming and yell to someone in the house, 'Here come Colbert's colts! Call him up and tell him!' Then they'd turn us back, and Mr. Colbert would come for us. He'd be awfully mad, and scold, and hurry us home with bells on, but we didn't care.

"One day I took the colts over to see our own farm. My mother saw us coming. 'Oh, go back, go back,' she said, 'before anyone sees you! It breaks my heart to have you make our good master so much trouble!' I really did feel ashamed then, and we all sneaked home without a word.

"But my master soon heard of my mischief. Mr. Colbert wrote him a note, 'Come and get your colt! She has taught all the others to jump. I can't keep them anywheres.' My master came and got me and led me sadly home. 'Oh Fleetfoot, you foolish, foolish coltie!' he said, 'Why couldn't you behave? And what shall I do with you now?' I was a little sorry to go for I hated to leave Pepper and Moonshine and Sleepyhead. We had had such good times together. We nickered to each other as long as we could hear.

"When we got home my master fitted some such contraption on me as you've got on now, and I spent all my time trying to get the best of it. At last I found that by holding my head

down I could jump in spite of it, and jump I did. I spent that night in the garden and had the finest meal of carrots that I ever tasted. Then my master tried other hopples. Some of them tied all four of my feet to straps, and one of them made me drag a weight, but I either managed to jump with them or got so tangled up that he was afraid I'd hurt myself, so he took them off.

"At last he said, 'There's only one thing to do, Fleetfoot! Say goodbye to the green fields and the brook and the sky!' and he led me into the dark barn and tied me up. Oh, the long, long days! All I could do was to peep out of the barn door and see the sun warm and yellow on everything, and get a glimpse of my mother going by about her work, or the children playing. No more gallops, no rolls, no lovely nights in the dew and stars! Nothing but darkness and my head tied fast to the manger. No green grass to eat, only dry old hay! Jack and Peter and Emily brought me

an apple once in a while, but that didn't begin to make up for it.

"Nobody paid much attention to me, either. My master frowned when he saw me. The hired man grumbled about having to feed and water 'that blamed colt!' The work horses used to snicker when they came into the stalls,

'See our famous high jumper!
She'll come a good bumper!'

My, how I would dance, I'd be so mad.

"And my mother! She wouldn't look at me. I'd call and call, 'M-huh-huh-huh, Mother dear!'

"She'd turn her head away. 'Don't talk to me! I'm disgraced! To think that a daughter of mine should behave so!' That did make me feel pretty bad.

"Well, after several weeks, my master let me out one evening 'Now, my poor colt,' he said, 'Be good, won't you?' and he rubbed my nose. The minute he slipped off the halter I was away like a flash. I galloped and I kicked up

and I rolled. I drank the sweet brook water, and I ate clover and snuffed the wind, and had such a good time.

"Then I began to sort of forget about the dark barn. The fence looked very tempting, and over the fence were corn and oats and carrots. I don't know whether it was because it was dark, or because I hadn't jumped in so long, but anyhow I didn't jump high enough. My hoofs clipped the top rail and I came down like thunder. The stars all went out, and the wind roared, and then I didn't remember any more.

"After a while I saw light, and there was the lantern standing on the ground near my head. I heard the hired man's voice, 'Wal, that's the end of her. I guess she's bruk her neck, and a good thing, too, the pesky critter!'

"And then I felt my master's hands touching me gently here and there. 'No,' his kind voice said, 'I hope it isn't the end, Jake. She'll be as fine a horse as her mother some day, for all her foolishness. She doesn't seem to have

any bones broken and her eyes are clear. I think she'll try to get up in a minute. Won't you, pet?' He began to pat my neck and coax. Well, I tried it, and after a good many lurches and lots of pats and encouragement, I stood on my feet trembling like a leaf, and oh, my little colt, I hope you'll never feel as ill as I did. My master led me a step at a time to the barn and rubbed my poor body, and made me a thick bed of straw. And never a word of reproach, mind you! Only, 'My poor colt!' and 'Poor little girl!' Ah, he's the good master!" Mother Fleetfoot sighed, "Well, Mr. Jim Dandy, what with the kindness, and the shock of the fall, and my guilty conscience, I lost my taste for jumping. I settled down into a civilized beast, and I've often hoped that I've grown up as my master said, to be as good as my mother."

Jim Dandy shook his head and his chain clanked softly. "You've made it seem very sad, Mother. You've taken all the fun out of it!"

"You'll have all the fun taken out of you if

you keep on," grunted Mother Fleetfoot as she arched her front legs to get up. "Now, my famous high jumper, if you can manage that hopple, we'll go and get some clover. I see the moon over the hill."

And away they went, jerk-clank, jerk-clank.

WABBLY-LAMB

"MAA, maa, maa!"

Mother Blackface Sheep stopped nibbling and turned around. "Blaa," she called, "What's the matter now?"

"Maa, maa, maa!"

Mother Blackface began to run. "Blaa, where are you?"

Little Pet Lamb stuck her head out from behind a rock. "Peek-a-boo! Here I am! I knew I could make you run. You're terribly anxious about me, aren't you?"

Mrs. Blackface shook her head. "I've a notion to spank you. No wonder I'm anxious.

If you knew half the lambs that have been lost right in this very pasture you'd tremble inside all your wool. You come with me and stay where I can see you."

Pet Lamb tagged along behind her mother. "Lost in this pasture? How could they get lost in this pasture? Isn't there a fence?"

"Yes, but there are other ways to get lost, bad men, wild dogs! The wild dogs are the worst." Mother Blackface shuddered.

"I should think Rover'd drive them away."

"Oh, but they come at night and he can't see them."

"Mmm! Did you ever know anybody who got lost?"

"Yes, do you see the fat lady with the two lambs over on the next rock? She got lost when she was little."

"Oh, tell me about it!"

"Well, come over in the shade." They cuddled down in the shadow of a great gray rock, and Mother Blackface began. "You see her mother died when she was just a baby, and

Elsie and Jim taught her to drink milk out of a bottle and brought her up. They made a great pet of her and named her Wabbly-lamb because her knees were so shaky. They used to come to the fence and call, 'Wabbly! Wabbly!' and she'd go a-scampering to them. Often they took her to the house, and she'd come back and tell great tales of all she saw; how funny the carpets felt under her feet; how the children said they were made out of wool, and how lots of queer-looking things were made out of wool; their clothes, and cushions and blankets; and how they said that some day things would be made out of her very own wool. And it's true. I don't know how it is done, but all sorts of things are made out of wool.

"Well, Wabbly-lamb grew very fast on the bottle, and we all helped to take care of her. We watched her as much as we could, just as I watch you, and tried to see that she didn't stray away and that she was safe in the fold with us at night.

"One afternoon I missed her. I said to my

In the Pasture.

neighbor, Mrs. Woolback, 'Have you seen Wabbly-lamb?'

"And she said, 'Why, Elsie and Jim were here a few minutes ago. I guess they took her to the house.' So we didn't think any more about it.

"It came sunset time, and the shadows got long, and we went to the gate and had our salt. Then the good master opened the door of the fold and said, 'Step along, Woolies,' as he always does, and watched us file in.

"Rover counted us, too. I was last, and he said to me, 'Where's Wabbly-lamb?'

"I said, 'Why, Mrs. Woolback says Elsie and Jim took her.'

"And he said, 'Oh, then that's all right.'

"My master said, 'I don't see Wabbly, but I suppose the children have her,' and he shut the door tight and said, 'Safe and sound, Woolies!' and he went away humming a lovely hymn,

'The Lord is My Shepherd,
No want shall I know;
I lie in green pastures,
Safe folded I rest.'

It always makes me want to cry, it's so nice.

"It got dark soon, and we cuddled down and were almost asleep, when we heard a cruel snuffing outside and the scratch of terrible nails on the boards.

"Mrs. Woolback whispered, 'The wild dogs are about tonight!' and our babies began to whimper.

" 'Never fear, dearies,' we said, 'Our master is good, and the fold is strong.'

"Well, the dogs found they couldn't get in so they went away. We dropped off to sleep.

"I was wakened by the flashing of the lantern through the cracks. My master and the hired man and Rover came to the door. They flung it open and we leaped to our feet and blinked in the light. My master held the lantern high and counted us. 'No, she isn't here,' he said.

" 'Oh Rover!' we blatted, 'What is it?'

" 'It's Wabbly-lamb.' said Rover. 'The children didn't have her. She must be lost.'

" 'Oh Rover, and the bad dogs are about tonight!'

" 'I know!' said Rover. 'I smelled them.'

" 'Come,' said the master, 'There's no time to be lost. We must search the pasture!' and away they went, Rover far ahead and the lantern gleaming fainter and fainter.

"Poor Wabbly-lamb, lost in the dark pasture and the terrible dogs about! I know how it goes. I've heard the old ones tell. It's a shadow ahead of you, and a shadow behind you, coming closer and closer, and snap! You are dragged down.

"We listened and listened, and by and by away off we heard Rover bark, high and sharp. 'He's found her!' we said, but then we heard snarls and yelps and more high barks, and we knew that Rover was fighting for his life and Wabbly-lamb's. Oh, if the farmer would only get there in time! Then all was still.

"We couldn't do anything but wait. Was Wabbly-lamb dead? Was Rover dead, too? We couldn't tell. By and by we heard faint

footsteps, and I was sure I heard the patter of Rover's feet. Then the lantern glimmered again, and they came near. 'I guess we'd better take her to the house.' I heard my master say, and in his arms was Wabbly-lamb. Her little head lay on his shoulder and her eyes were closed as if she were asleep.

" 'Oh Rover,' I called, 'Is she dead?'

" 'No,' said Rover. 'Master says she'll be all right. We were just in time.'

" 'And the terrible dogs?'

" 'Oh, we finished them. They'll never bother lambs again,' he said.

"Well, it was weeks before little Wabbly-lamb could play in the pasture, and she still has the scar where the dogs bit her. Now do you wonder that I'm anxious when you are out of my sight?"

"Oh, Mother!" Pet Lamb's eyes were very round, "The pasture is so pleasant by day, I never thought about the night."

"Of course not," said Mrs. Blackface, "but you see mothers know best, little Pet Lamb!"

TWINKLEPAWS AND HIS NINTH LIFE

IT was a very hot afternoon, but the barn was cool and dim. The sun pouring in through the great cracks in the weather boards made the hay smell dry and sweet, and the breeze through the open door kept the fringes of the hay mows swaying.

Granny Gray-cat and the four kittens lay sprawled on the hay. Through the door they could see Mrs. Malty making her way sedately towards the meadow. "Where's she going, Grandma?" said Tumble.

"After field mice."

"Oh, I'm going, too!"

"You are not! She doesn't want you. You'd spoil the fun."

"I wouldn't! I'd keep quiet."

"Yes, very likely," said Granny, "when you can't keep still a minute. Dear, dear, I did hope you'd curl up and go to sleep. You can all sleep for hours when your mother's home, but the minute she goes out you are possessed. Off you go, all different ways, and I can't be in four places at once, goodness knows! Now Tumble," Granny lifted a threatening paw, "You're not going to set a claw off this hay mow! And Frisk, you needn't edge for that rat hole! After what I've told you about Twinklepaws I should think you'd keep away from rat holes."

"Oh mew, mew, mew," said all four kittens, "Granny, tell us another story!"

"About Twinklepaws!" said Whisk.

"Whyee," said Granny, "I don't know as there's any more stories about Twinklepaws."

"Oh Granny, think hard! He must have done something else besides get caught in that rat hole."

Granny scratched her chin with her hind leg and thought, then she said, "Yes, I guess it must have been Twinklepaws that lost his ninth life."

"His ninth life! Mew, mew, mew!" all the kittens wriggled closer and lay still.

"Yes, and that's another scrape that Tom and Bessie got him into. Of course they didn't mean it, but you know he always swallowed what they said claws, tail, and whiskers.

"Well, it seems one time he got caught in a trap that Farmer Dell had set for hedgehogs, and the children heard him crying, 'Let-me-out, me-out, me-out!' and they ran and let him out, and he had a pretty sore foot afterwards. He put down three and carried one for quite a while.

"The children were talking about it one day, and Bessie said, 'That's two of Twinkle's lives gone.'

"'How do you mean?' said Tom.

"'Why, they say cats have nine lives, you know. He nearly died in the rat hole. That was one, and if we hadn't heard him he might have died in the trap. That's two. Now he's got seven left.'

"'Mi-yow!' thought Twinklepaws, 'I'd better be careful. They're going fast. Here I am, not a year old, and two gone already.'

"But it seemed that the more careful Twinklepaws tried to be, the more things happened to him. The next day the horse almost stepped on him. That was three. And the next day he was snooping and fell into the churn, which served him right, but anyhow it made four.

"Then the next day a strange dog chased him and almost got him. Yes sir, he skinned up a tree just in time; and the very same day he nearly got caught by the mowing machine in the meadow. That made six.

"Next he ate some poison that somebody

had carelessly thrown about for the rats, and he thought that his time had come, and that he was going to waste a few lives; but he pulled through and that made seven.

"A few days later he was out hunting in the tall grass, and Farmer Dell saw the grass waving and thought he was a woodchuck, and almost shot him. That was eight. 'One left! My paws and whiskers! I've got to look out!' He hardly dared stir from the barn he was so afraid something would happen. He stayed in the hay mow and of course he got terribly bored. He couldn't sleep all the time and there wasn't much hunting, for most of the rats and mice had gone to the fields for the summer. When the other cats started out on a field expedition they'd say, 'Come on, Twinklepaws, be a sport!' but Twinklepaws would shake his head. No sir! He was going to hang on to his one and only life.

"His mother thought he was sick and pestered him half to death. 'Twinklepaws, do

let me get you a little catnip!' and 'Is it your head, or is it your stomach?'

"Well, one afternoon everybody went mousing. Twinklepaws was left all alone. He wandered about from loft to loft, and from stall to stall. 'M-mow? M-mow?' he said plaintively, 'Nothing to do! I can't stand this much longer.'

"At last he came to the cow shed. Mrs. Bossy Cow was there all alone with her brand new baby. She was nervous and fussy about it, and wouldn't allow anyone to come near, so when Twinklepaws stuck his head through the cats' door, she said, 'Mmmm, keep away!'

"Twinkle started to say, 'Meaw, meaw, all right, old crosspatch!' when he saw a shadow move behind her. It was a mouse. He forgot all about his ninth life and made a spring for it, right behind Mrs. Bossy's heels. Crack! Mrs. Bossy kicked him. Plunk! He fell all a-sprawl on the hay. 'This is the end of me!' he thought, and closed his eyes and lay quite still.

"Now Twinklepaws' mother was so anxious about him that she hated to leave him alone, so when the cats got almost to the fields she said, 'You'll have to excuse me! I'm going back. I'm so worried about my son that I can't bear to be away from him.' Back she went, and just as she got to the door she saw Mrs. Bossy kick her Twinklepaws a-sailing right into the hay.

"She ran as fast as she could, 'Oh mew, mew, mew, my dear Twinklepaws, are you dead?'

" 'Yes,' said Twinklepaws.

"His mother stopped crying. 'Oh no, you're not, but sit up, my poor dear, and let me see where you're hurt.'

" 'I can't!' said Twinklepaws, without opening his eyes, 'I'm dead!'

" 'You're not dead!' said Lady, 'What makes you think you are?'

" 'Oh,' said Twinklepaws with his eyes still tight shut, 'I've lost my ninth life!'

" 'Your ninth life! What nonsense is that?'

" 'Why, Tom and Bessie said cats have nine lives, and——'

"'Tom and Bessie!' Lady snorted. 'They'll be the death of you yet. Get up!'

"Twinklepaws pulled himself up joint by joint. 'Me-ouch, I'm stiff! Ain't I dead?'

"'No!'

"'Don't cats have nine lives?'

"'No!'

"'I'm going to tell Tom and Bessie they're fibbers.'

"'Go ahead! I wish you would. Is that what's been the matter with you all these days?'

"'Mmmm,' said Twinkle humbly.

"'Twinklepaws,' said Lady, 'I've a notion to ssscratch you!'

"Twinklepaws hobbled away. He found Tom and Bessie under the apple tree. He said,

'Mmmm-mew?
See the mess you got me intooo?'

"'Why Twinkle,' they said, 'What's made you so stiff?'

"And Twinkle said, 'M-mow? It's all your fault. If you hadn't said I had nine lives I

wouldn't have been afraid, and I wouldn't have stayed in the barn, and I wouldn't have gone behind the cow, and she wouldn't have kicked me, and I wouldn't have thought I was dead. Mm-mow?'

"Tom and Bessie didn't understand a word, but they said they were sorry just the same." Granny began to scratch her chin again, "That flea!"

"But Granny," said Tumble, "Wasn't it true? Wasn't he dead?"

"Mmm-no," scratch, scratch, scratch, Granny's voice sounded all choky. "There, I guess I turned that one over!" She sat up straight and looked at the long shadows, "Half past four! Your mother said she'd meet us at the cow shed at milking time. Come along!" so down they went. "Remember Twinklepaws," she said as they came to the long row of cows. They went away around in front of the stanchions, and there was Mrs. Malty already at the saucer.

"Prrr-meow? Prrr-meow? Hurry, children!" she said, and they all had warm milk for supper.

THE GOLDEN STEEPLE

MOTHER FANTAIL PIGEON sat in the little barn window away up under the eaves. It was really the front door of her home. "Coo, coo, children!" she called. "Look out and see your father sitting on the church steeple!"

The two baby pigeons craned their little necks and peeped out. "Oh yes, I see him!" said Arrow.

"Coo, coo, Daddy!" called Swift.

"Feather-head!" said Mother Fantail, "He can't hear you so far away." Then she laughed, "He looks like Penelope Pigeon."

"Who was Penelope Pigeon?"

"Well now, you just settle down and I'll tell you."

The two little pigeons cuddled down in the nest and Mother Fantail began, "Well, Penelope Pigeon lived in a barn just like ours I suppose, away off in a valley near the sea. She was a tiny little thing, but she was as pretty as a picture, with her little red feet and her white feathers that shone like a pearl. Everybody liked her because she was so gentle and quiet.

"On the hill above the village where Penelope lived stood the little white church. Its slim spire pointed up to the sky like a long, long finger. The sun shone on it first in the morning and last at night, long after the village was tucked away under a blanket of shadow. The pigeons used to sit on the barn roof and watch it. When the sunshine left the very tip of the arrow of the weather vane, they'd say, 'There, the day is over!' and then they'd say, 'Coo, coo, good night!' and they'd go to bed.

"One evening the sun was very yellow and

clear. There wasn't a cloud in the sky, and the sunshine poured on the little church in a blaze. One of the young pigeons cried, 'See! The steeple has turned into gold, and the windows are on fire!' The pigeons had never thought of it before.

" 'Will it burn?' cried one.

" 'Oh, no,' said another. 'Gold cannot burn.'

" 'Poo!' said an old pigeon, 'It hasn't turned to gold. I've seen it like that before. It's only the sunlight.'

"Then a great dispute arose. Half the pigeons were sure the steeple had turned to gold. Half believed that it was only the sunlight. They got so excited that they forgot to go to bed, and they squabbled and fluttered until the farmer came out to see if the cat was disturbing them.

" 'Coo, coo,' said Penelope softly, 'Why not go and see?'

" 'Oh yes,' said the pigeons. 'That's the thing to do. It's too late tonight, but tomorrow night one of us can go and see what happens.'

So they agreed that the young pigeon who had first noticed the golden steeple should go.

"The next evening when the sun shone red on the church the young pigeon started out and flew as fast as he could towards the steeple. It was dark when he got back and he was all trembling.

" 'What did you find?' cried the pigeons.

" 'Oh,' he said, 'I did not get to the church at all. A great white owl chased me. I am lucky to get home alive.' He shuddered at the thought.

" 'Well,' said the pigeons, 'Someone else must go.'

" 'I'll go,' said Penelope's brother. 'You know I am very swift on the wing.' So the next evening when the sunset shone red on the little church, Penelope's brother started and he flew swift as an arrow over the house tops. After a while he came hurrying back.

" 'What happened? What happened?' cried the pigeons.

" 'I couldn't tell,' he said. 'Just as I got to

the steeple the sun set, and I couldn't tell whether it was wood or gold.'

"'Humph!' said the old pigeon. 'This is a great deal of trouble for nothing. Why don't you take my word for it that it is nothing but the sunlight?' But the pigeons wouldn't agree to that.

"'Coo, coo, I'll go,' said Penelope Pigeon in her soft voice.

"'You? A little thing like you?'

"'Yes,' said Penelope, 'I'll go early, and I'll wait for the sunset and I'll watch, and then I'll come and tell you exactly what happens.'

"The next afternoon Penelope said, 'Coo, coo, good bye!' and she fluttered to the little church and lit on the arrow on the very top of the steeple. The pigeons could see her sitting there, a tiny white speck.

"After a while the sun set and it glowed on the steeple as red as fire. 'See! See!' cried the pigeons, 'The steeple has turned to gold,' and then they shouted, 'Penelope has turned to gold, too!'

"Sure enough, she looked like a tiny gold pigeon sitting on the arrow of the weather vane.

" 'Dear, dear,' cried Penelope's brother, 'Will she never come back, but just sit there and turn forever in the wind like the gold rooster on the barn?'

"The pigeons shook their heads. They didn't know. But after the shadow had fallen Penelope came flying home.

" 'What happened? What happened?' cried the pigeons.

" 'Nothing happened,' said Penelope. 'The steeple did not change to gold nor the windows to fire. It was just the yellow sunlight after all.'

"The old pigeon strutted up and down. 'Now,' he said, 'Didn't I tell you? I was right. You don't seem to realize it, but I know everything.'

" 'Yes,' said Penelope, 'But while I sat on the steeple I saw the sun set over the sea, and it turned the water to gold. What about that?'

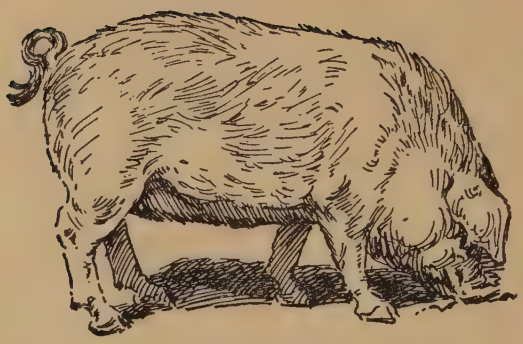
"The old pigeon couldn't answer, and as none of the pigeons dared fly so far they never knew." Mother Fantail stopped short as Father Fantail fluttered down to the window.

"Coo, coo! Come, come!" he said. "The farmer is feeding the chickens, and we must get our share of the grain." Away they flew and the baby pigeons were left all alone.

"I wonder if that's all of the story," said Arrow.

"I don't know," said Swift.

Just then their mother and father came back with their supper, and they forgot all about it.



MR. PIGGLE

MRS. BERKSHIRE PIG and her family lay under the apple tree, and puffed and puffed. "Mmmph, what a hot day," said Mrs. Berkshire, "Get deeper in the mud, my dears. There's nothing like it to cool you off."

All nine little pigs wriggled their bodies and squshed their toes in the mud, and said, "Mmmph, mmmph, that feels good!"

Up jumped Curly-tail, "Wee, here comes Rover!" and he started to run, and so did his brothers and sisters, "Weee, wee, wee!"

Mrs. Berkshire Pig and Her Family.

"Come back, sillies!" said Mrs. Berkshire. "You needn't be afraid. Rover's your best friend. Didn't you ever hear how he saved Mr. Piggle's life?"

"No, no!"

"Yes, Mr. Piggle told me all about it himself. He said it began one morning when he was feeling a little lonesome, as his wife was busy with the children. He said he called to her, 'Diana, come and take a little saunter 'round the orchard!' but she wouldn't even answer, so he said, 'Mmph!' very short, 'Nice manners, you have! I'll go alone!'

"He ambled along inspecting the fence as he went, giving it a poke here and there to make sure that it was tight so that the children couldn't get out. By and by he came to a place that seemed loose. He poked it and a rail fell down. He poked again and another rail fell down. 'Dear me,' said Mr. Piggle, 'This really is not safe!' Just then he saw a carrot lying on the ground outside. 'My,' he said, 'It's a shame for that to go to waste. I'll just

slip out and get it.' So he climbed over the rails and picked up the carrot. 'Mmmph, mmmph, very nice,' and he scronched it down. Then he looked up the lane. 'Well,' he said, 'Since I'm out I might as well take a look around. Come to think of it, I've never seen much of our farm.' He sauntered up the lane nibbling a bit of green here and there until he came to the farm house. 'Mmmph,' he said, 'So this is the house? Very nice house!' Then he walked to the front gate. 'And this is the road, I presume, that I've heard our horses talk about. Well, I think I'll go along it a ways.'

"Just as he slipped out of the gate, Rover came along. 'Look here, Piggle,' he said severely, 'What are you doing out of your pen?'

" 'Just sauntering,' said Mr. Piggle.

" 'This is no place to saunter.' said Rover. 'A motor car might run over you. I have to step lively myself. You wouldn't have a chance, you fat old thing!'

" 'Mmmmph! Nice manners!' said Mr.

Piggle. 'Rover, I'm a goin'!' and he stepped out into the road.

"Rover began to bark like mad, 'Bow, wow, wow! Piggle's out! Piggle's out!' but nobody heard him, for they were all at the barn milking. Rover ran up the path yelling for help.

" 'What a fuss,' said Mr. Piggle, and he walked down the road. His feet went tick, tick, tick on the concrete. 'Very nice and smooth, I'm sure,' he said, 'But a little hard, a little hard. I think I'll walk on the side.' So he walked on the side and nibbled grass here and there.

"Once in a while a flash of lightning and thunder went by, but there wasn't any rain. 'Peculiar,' said Mr. Piggle.

"Pretty soon he came to a mean looking little shanty, not at all like his master's home, but dirty and tumble-down, and a horrible dog came out and said, 'Grrr, I'll bite your leg! I'll bite your leg!'

"Then a dirty tumble-down man came to the door, and he laughed an ugly growl, and called

to his wife, 'Look at the hams and bacon a walking right into our yard.'

"Now you know we pigs never talk about hams and bacon. Mr. Piggle felt quite ill. 'Dear me,' he said, 'I'm sure I've sauntered too far,' and he started to turn around, but the ugly dog was right behind him, 'Grrr, I'll bite your leg!'

" 'Grab him by the ear!' said the man, 'I'll twist his tail, and we'll drag him into the house. I s'pose he belongs to old Dell, but he can't search without a warrant, and by that time there won't be no pig.'

"Mr. Piggle felt cold. 'Weee, weee, weee!' he cried. 'Rover! Rover! Farmer Dell! Farmer Dell! Wee, weee!'

And then he heard Rover away down the road, 'Bow, wow, wow! Piggle! Piggle!'

" 'Hurry!' said the man, but Piggle set all four feet and wouldn't budge, and squealed with all his lungs, 'Wee, wee, wee!' Rover came a-flying and Farmer Dell close after him.

" 'Good morning, Mr. Dell,' said the tumble-

down man, sweet as pie, 'I see your pig a-running away and I was just a-going to shut him up and come and tell you!'

"'Much obliged!' said Farmer Dell, very short, 'Come, Piggle!' He tied a rope to Piggle's hind leg so that he shouldn't get away, but he needn't have, for Piggle was so glad to see him that he would have followed him fifty miles.

"They went back along the road. Rover was very important. 'Sniff, sniff, see?' he said. 'If it hadn't been for me, you'd have been hams and bacon by now!'

"'Hams and bacon! Brrr! Don't talk about it! I know, Rover. I'm sorry, and I thank you!'

"Just then something roared past.

"'What are these flashes of lightning, Rover?'

"Rover sat down and laughed. 'Flashes of lightning! Ho, ho! They're motor cars. You're lucky one didn't hit you.'

"'Motor cars! Dear me!' puffed Mr. Piggle. 'This has been a saunter!'

"It took a long while to get back home. Mr. Piggle had to stop and rest often. He got all out of breath, being so fat and not used to exercise. Farmer Dell put him through the gap in the fence and nailed the rails fast. 'There,' he said, 'You bad old animal! You won't get out again.'

"Mr. Piggle tried to say that he was sorry, but he hadn't enough breath left. He had to lie down and rest.

"After a while he hurried down to his house to tell his wife all about it. She hadn't even missed him. 'Diana,' he called, 'Such a saunter as I've had! It will do to tell to our children and great-grand-children!'

"She didn't answer.

"'Don't you want to hear about it?'

"She didn't answer.

"'Mmmph! Nice manners!' said Mr. Piggle, and he gave it up."

"Where's Mr. Piggle now?" said Curly-tail.

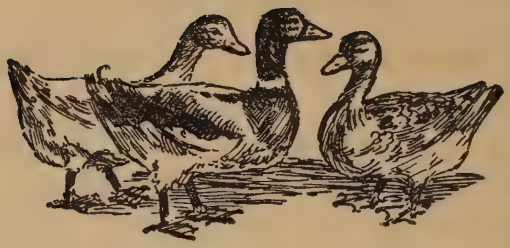
"I don't just know," said Mrs. Berkshire evasively.

"And Rover saved his life?"

"Yes."

"My," said Curly-tail, "I wish there was a hole for me to get out of. I'd like to have my life saved."

"Mmmph!" said Mrs. Berkshire, "Isn't that just like a pig?"



MR. INJA-RUNNER

FATHER DUCK, Mother Duck, Uncle Duck, Aunt Duck and all their little ducklings came up from the pond in a long procession. Father Duck led the way. "Quack, quack," he said as they waddled through the tall grass, "You take this, and I'll take that," and he snapped off the shining grass seeds.

"Quack, quack, you take this, and I'll take that," said every duck in the procession.

Father Duck led them to the orchard and they all sat down in the shade. They looked

like a fleet of little white boats on a green grass sea.

"Quack, quack, Father Duck," said Ducky Clatterbill, the oldest of the ducklings, "Tell us a story, do!"

"Quack, quack," said Father Duck modestly, "I donno as I know a story."

"Oh, yes you do!" said Aunt Duck. "I remember you were the champion story teller when we were young birds together. How about Mr. Inja-runner? I used to laugh my feathers loose over that story. I'd like to hear it again."

"Oh yes, quack, quack," said all the ducks. "Mr. Inja-runner! That sounds like a good one."

"Well," Father Duck stretched his neck and cleared his bill, "It goes this way. Once upon a time there was a duck called Mr. Inja-runner. He was a pompous old waddler. All the Inja-runners are for that matter. Well, he went about guzzling up the best of everything and bossing everybody 'round. When

the ducks went to the pond or on any of their walks, he'd say,

'Quack, quack, quack,
Stand back, back, back!'

and he'd lead the procession. If any of the young ducks got in his way, he'd just take them by the wing and toss them. He really thought he knew everything, too. He as good as said so, and he set up to be a bit of a doctor. 'If you don't feel well, come to me!' he'd say. 'I can cure you. Don't go to the farmer! He's as likely to cut your head off as anything!'

"Well, it got so that if the ducklings asked too many questions, the old ducks would say, 'Oh, do go ask Mr. Inja-runner!' or if anyone had a coated bill, they'd say, 'Do go show Mr. Inja-runner!' Mr. Inja-runner would give them a duckweed pill, and as ducks never have much the matter with them anyhow, they'd get well. The old ducks thought that Mr. Inja-runner was quite a bird.

"The young ducks didn't like him so well.

They were tired of being tossed and bossed, and told to stand back, back, back.

"One day Mr. Inja-runner tossed little Willie Duck, and Willie fell on a stone and was lame afterwards. He was mad. He said, 'Here I am waddling limpety-go-fetch-it, all because of that old brute. I'm tired of being bossed, and I'm tired of hearing him tell how much he knows. I don't believe he knows a thing for all his talk. He's a quack, he is. I wish I could think of some way to show him up.' He ran his bill along his feathers thoughtfully, then he jerked his head. 'I know!'

" 'Quack, what?' said the young ducks.

" 'Well,' said Willie, 'You know he claims to be a doctor?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Well, tomorrow when we come out of the pond I'll drop on the bank and close my eyes. You run and yell, 'Willie Duck's sick! Willie Duck's sick!' and he'll come running, I'll guarantee. Then when he says I've got some terrible thing and tells what'll cure me, I'll

jump up and laugh and tell him he's a quack.

" 'He'll toss you, sure!' said one duck.

"But all the rest said, 'Oh quack, quack, yes! Let's do it! What fun it will be!'

"So the next day when they came from swimming the young ducks began to scream, 'Quack, quack, Willie Duck's sick! Willie Duck's sick!' and all the ducks gathered 'round. Sure enough, Mr. Inja-runner came a-puffing.

'Quack, quack, quack,
Stand back, back, back,

and give him air!' There lay Willie Duck on the grass, limp as an old dish rag.

" 'Snap his bill!' said Mr. Inja-runner, and they snapped it.

" 'Flap his wings!' and they flapped them.

" 'Pump his legs!' and they pumped them.

" 'Skin back his eyelid!' so they skinned back his eyelid and old Mr. Inja-runner peered into his eye. Willie Duck nearly burst out laughing, but he choked it down.

" 'Humph, quack!' said Mr. Inja-runner, 'I know what's the matter with him. He's got the quackitis, and he's got it bad, but I can cure him. I can cure him.'

"Everybody looked at him in awe, and Willie Duck, lying on the ground, never moved a feather.

"Mr. Inja-runner began to give orders. 'Johnny, you go to the burdock and git me a leaf! Sairy, you go to the meadow and git me a calamus root. Mis' Webfoot, you——'

"And then a funny thing happened. Willie Duck hopped up and he roared, 'Quack, quack, Mr. Inja-runner, you're a quack! I knew it! I knew it! There isn't anything the matter with me. You're a quack! You're a quack!'

"All the ducks began to laugh, 'Mr. Inja-runner's a quack! Mr. Inja-runner's a quack!'

"That was too much for Mr. Inja-runner. He grabbed Willie Duck by the wing and tossed him; but Willie landed in the pond and swam away shouting, 'Mr. Inja-runner's a quack!' and all the other ducks followed him

and sailed away calling, 'Mr. Inja-runner's a quack!'

"Mr. Inja-runner was left all alone on the bank. He called,

'Quack, quack, quack,
Come back, back, back!'

but nobody paid any attention. They had a procession on the other shore and Willie led it. They marched to the tune of

'Quack, quack,
Inja-runner quack!
Quack, quack,
Inja-runner quack!'

and Mr. Inja-runner wished he'd never talked so much about what he knew."

Aunt Duck wiped her eyes. "I declare it's as funny as ever."

Ducky Clatterbill bounced up. "Come on, fellers! I'll be Willie Duck!" and he began to march. All the ducklings fell into line behind him. They marched around Father Duck

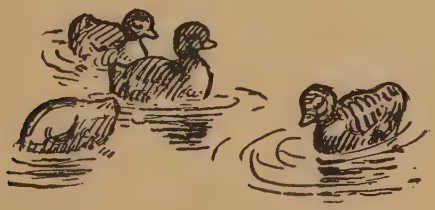
and Mother Duck, Aunt Duck and Uncle Duck, roaring,

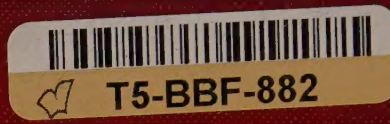
"Quack, quack,
Inja-runner quack!"

Then they headed for the pond, and the last that the old ducks heard of them away off, was

"Quack, quack,
Inja-runner quack!"

as Ducky Clatterbill led them into the water.

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